



Child Portrait: Cally* (pseudonym)

Cally was born on August 23rd, 2002 to her mother Lisa and father John. Cally's parents were married at the time of her birth but they divorced a few short months after having their only child together. Born and raised in Seattle, Cally has had a number of experiences and shared them with many people who have influenced her development. Now six years and nine months old, Cally has blossomed into a sweet and rambunctious young girl who is ready to take the world head on.

Parents typically play a large role in the development of their children, and this is no exception in Cally's case. Her mother was born in Acapulco, Mexico and her mother's parents still reside there today. Cally's mother speaks both Spanish and English, and she is very much connected to her Latino roots. Cally, who lives mostly with her mother in Seattle, has been influenced most notably by her mother Lisa. Cally's auntie, Iris Grisel, lives with them as well in their two-bedroom apartment and Cally loves the company, especially because it allows her to share a bedroom with her mom. Cally learned to speak Spanish from her mother, auntie, and grandmother Porfiria. She also learned about her Mexican heritage from them. Cally has even travelled to Mexico to spend time with her mother and grandparents in Acapulco. Every six months or so, Cally's favorite grandmother Porfiria also comes to live with Cally for a few months. Cally very much enjoys the stories her grandmother tells her and she loves learning about the music, art, and food of the Spanish culture to which she is rooted. Her favorite food is posole, a chicken dish she eats quite frequently during her time in Mexico and when her grandmother stays with her in Seattle. The heritage and culture of Cally's mother thus has a large impact on how Cally identifies herself.

Cally's father has also had a great influence on her development. Born in Oregon, Cally's father moved to Seattle in his twenties and eventually met Lisa. Cally's father, John, is African American and he too lives in Seattle. Unlike Cally's mother, John knows very little Spanish except for what Cally has taught him. She loves to help others and teach people what she knows. Cally loves explaining how she taught her dad important words in Spanish like names of foods and how to get to the bathroom. John is now dating a woman named Cammie, with whom he has a son. Cally refers to him as her brother even though they have different moms. She is however very sensitive to the fact that he has another child with a different woman. Cally appears to be very attached to

her mom and doesn't want anyone to hurt her. When she talks about her dad, she constantly asks people not to tell her mom that she likes her brother and spending time with her dad. It is very noticeable that Cally misses having her dad around. She spends Sundays and occasional Mondays with him, but chooses not to spend time with his new girlfriend. It hurts Cally when she is unable to spend the little time with him that she has, as was seen in her devastation when he failed to pick her up from El Centro de la Raza after promising her he would be there one day.

As can be seen, family is crucial to Cally. She talks about her family all the time and loves to do fun things with them. Her favorite memories are Christmas holidays shared with her mom and dad, as well as her Grandma Porfiria. She loves Christmas time because she is able to spend time with her family doing things she likes best including crafts, cooking, baking, and decorating. Cally also loves the presents, singing, and Christmas lights too!

Religion has also played a role in Cally's life. She is "Catolica" or Catholic and can remember going to church at a very young age. She and her mother are consistent church goers as they wake up early every Sunday morning to visit Santa Maria's Church. Cally's mother has always stressed to her the importance of religion and faith. They pray together and Cally is never hesitant to convey her values to others. Every so often, I find Cally praying before she eats snack despite none of the other students doing so. One thing I admire about Cally is her confidence in herself and her beliefs. She is not afraid to express her faith or beliefs even when her peers confront her for being open about such issues.

School has a great impact on Cally as well. She is a first grader at Bailey Gatzert Elementary in Seattle, Washington. Cally wakes up each weekday morning at 7:30 a.m. excited to go to school. She enjoys a delicious breakfast with her mom, but her favorite breakfast dish is waffles and bananas. After brushing her teeth, Cally loves to pick out her clothes and then ask her mom if they look just right. Her mom then drives her to school where she goes to Mr. Copeland's class. Cally loves the start of the school day as she gets to do the Pledge of Allegiance and then the class song which helps the students learn about listening and being kind to people. She also enjoys school as she gets to spend time with her best friend Karla, and her other good friends, Fernanda, Emily, Heidi, and Desiree. They have a lot of fun at lunch and Cally always enjoys a good meal. Most of the time she has cold lunch packed by her mom, but she always gets excited when she has hot lunch on the day where fish nuggets and mini bananas are served. And any time we are visiting Bailey Gatzert for literacy, Cally somehow manages to find me amongst the crowd and call out my name while waving both hands in the air.

The most notable impact I have seen on Cally is El Centro de la Raza's after school program. The teachers and students at El Centro are Cally's second family. She has been at El Centro for a little

over a year and she is very familiar with the staff and families served at the center. She is the most consistent student at El Centro and is usually there the longest of all the children. Her mother picks her up from school and drops her off at El Centro every Monday through Friday around 3 pm. Lisa then returns, or has a family friend return, to pick up Cally right around 5:45 pm. Cally misses her mother while she is gone, just as she misses her father, but she easily transitions into her time at El Centro. When asked what she liked best about El Centro, Cally replied, "I like that they help me with my homework." El Centro is a great resource for Cally as the staff works hard to communicate with her school teachers and promote the best academic learning for Cally, and others, as possible.

Cally always has a warm smile on when she enters the room. She is usually dressed in pink or magenta leggings, with a blue or pink Hannah Montana or High School Musical 3 t-shirt, and bright colored sandals or rain boots. Her hair, which is wildly curly, is usually pulled back into a loose ponytail so her curls fall out gently. And Cally always has some fancy nail polish on her fingernails and toenails. Cally and her mom love to give each other manicures and pedicures as it is a fun bonding activity for them. Cally's fingers usually have bright pink polish with a white or silver flower decorated on top.

Cally loves to work with others. Whenever she has the chance to engage in cooperative learning or group play, Cally is eager to be surrounded by others. She doesn't have siblings at home so she loves to play with her peers on the playground and in the classroom. During outside play, Cally usually finds a friend to play on the swings with or she tags along with a volunteer like myself. She is enthusiastic during snack time as other students tell their stories or jokes. Cally loves listening to others and shows her enjoyment with lots of laughter. During reading, Cally works hard to find a good book and she loves reading to others. When the end of the day comes and only she and another student are left, Cally jumps at the opportunity to read a book to the teachers, volunteers, and remaining students. Reading is one of Cally's favorite subjects and this is reflected in her reading abilities.

Whenever Cally has the opportunity to socialize with others, she is doing so. Cally could talk for hours and laugh even longer. She simply loves the company of her peers and adult figures who play a role in her life. While Cally is almost always smiling, she can be quite sensitive when others say something hurtful or tell stories that are sad. She will cry when hurt, but a good hug will always cheer her up. Older students at El Centro have learned how warm and friendly Cally is, and they too know how to make her feel better when she isn't her cheerful self. But most of the time, Cally doesn't need to be cheered up. Most of the time, Cally is crazy, funny, talkative, rambunctious, and sweet. Cally is Cally, and she is an amazing young girl who brightens up your heart whenever you see her.